

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /105 W  
----- 117382

R 281810Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7684

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7709

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, ELAB, SP

SUBJ: NEW HEAD OF GOVERNMENT TO BE NAMED IN  
SPAIN

REF: MADRID 7647

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. COUNCIL OF THE REALM IS SCHEDULED TO MEET DECEMBER 28 TO PROPOSE THREE NAMES FROM WHICH FRANCO WILL PICK NEW PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT TO REPLACE ASSASSINATED CARRERO BLANCO. SO FAR, GOS HAS MAINTAINED IMPRESSION OF ORDER AND CALM. AGREEMENT OF COUNCIL ON LIST OF NAMES AND SELECTION OF PRESIDENT BY FRANCO FROM AMONG THEM IN NEXT FEW DAYS WOULD ALLOW FRANCO TO REITERATE IN HIS ANNUAL END-OF-YEAR MESSAGE CONTINUITY AND SOUNDNESS OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. COUNCIL OF THE REALM HAS SCHEDULED MEETING FOR 1630 LOCAL TIME DECEMBER 28 TO PREPARE LIST OF THREE CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT TO BE SUBMITTED TO FRANCO. MEETING  
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PRECEDED BY SEVERAL DAYS OF GOINGS AND COMINGS OF

MEMBERS OF COUNCIL AT CORTES, PRESUMABLY FOR INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS. OF SEVENTEEN MEMBERS, TWO KNOWN TO BE UNAVAILABLE BECAUSE OF ILLNESS SO THAT FIFTEEN ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE PART IN DELIBERATIONS. (LEGISLATION PRESCRIBES THAT ONE-HALF PLUS ONE; I.E., NINE, MUST BE PRESENT TO CONSTITUTE QUORUM.) ACCORDING TO NEWS DESPATCHES, FRANCO'S DECISION COULD BE MADE DEC 29. IF SO, THIS WOULD GIVE HIM OPORTUNITY IN HIS ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE, SCHEDULED FOR DELIVERY DEC 30, TO NOTE ORDERLY TRANSFER OF POWER FOLLOWING ASSASSINATION AND EMPHASIZE SOUNDNESS OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.

3. ORDER AND CALM HAVE CONTINUED TO PREVAIL IN FIRST WEEK FOLLOWING CARRERO BLANCO'S ASSASSINATION. STOCK MARKETS IN MADRID AND BARCELONA, WHICH HARDLY HAD TIME TO REACT TO ASSASSINATION BEFORE NORMAL CLOSING TIME DECEMBER 20, HAVE SHOWN RESILIENCE, EVEN A SLIGHT RECOVERY FROM LOW LEVELS REACHED FOLLOWING EARLIER REACTIONS TO OIL CRISIS. EMBASSY HAS HEARD THAT GOS ORDERED BANK OF SPAIN TO INTERVENE IN STOCK MARKET TO PREVENT SAG IN PRICES WHICH MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS EVIDENCE OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY. ALTHOUGH EMBASSY CANNOT CONFIRM THIS REPORT, IT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH OTHER ACTIONS TAKEN BY GOS, OR ABSENCE OF DRAMATIC ACTIONS, TO MAINTAIN IMPRESSION OF CONTINUED UNRUFFLED MANAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT.

4. ACCORDING TO SOME OBSERVERS, COUNCIL OF REALM, IN CONSULTATION WITH FRANCO, WILL TRY TO PRESENT SLATE IN WHICH LEADING CANDIDATE WILL REPRESENT UNANIMOUS CHOICE OF ALL PRESENT VOTING MEMBERS. THIS PRACTICE WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH PATTERN FOLLOWED IN CARRERO BLANCO'S ELECTION IN JUNE 1973 AND WOULD HELP REINFORCE IMPRESSION OF STABLE FUNCTIONING OF SPAIN'S POLITICAL INSTITUTION AND NATIONAL SOLIDARITY FOLLOWING TRAGIC DEMISE OF CARRERO BLANCO.

5. CHOICES NOW REPORTEDLY LEANING TOWARD POLITICAL MILITARY TANDEM IN POSITIONS OF PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT. ACTING PRESIDENT FERNANDEZ MIRANDA IS CONSIDERED FRONT-RUNNER FOR EITHER PRESIDENCY OR VICE-PRESIDENCY. CONFIDENTIAL

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OTHER LEADING POSSIBILITY AS CIVILIAN CANDIDATE, CORTES PRESIDENT VALCARCEL, IS ALSO PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL OF THE REALM AND IS THUS AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFIED UNLESS HE RESIGNS FROM COUNCIL. THIS CIRCUMSTANCE WOULD ALSO DISQUALIFY CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL DIEZ DE ALEGRIA AND MOVEMENT'S NATIONAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE GIRON DE VELASCO. SO FAR, THERE HAS BEEN NO SUGGESTION THAT ANY OF THREE INTENDED TO RESIGN FROM MEMBERSHIP ON COUNCIL. FORMER

MINISTER OF ARMY, GENERAL CASTANON, IS NOW CONSIDERED BY CONTACT AS LEADING MILITARY CANDIDATE, PARTICULARLY OWING TO HIS LONG PERSONAL ASSOCIATION WITH FRANCO, HIS YEARS AS POLITICAL PRECEPTOR OF PRINCE, AND HIS LACK OF POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION WITH ANY SPECIFIC POLITICAL GROUPING (THOUGH HE HAD GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH OPUS DEI FIGURES IN LAST CABINET). I PERSONALLY BELIEVE FORMER MINISTER OF NAVY NIETO ANTUNEZ TO BE MOST LIKELY MILITARY CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT, WITH FERNANDEZ MIRANDA RESUMING VICE PRESIDENCY. SELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENT WILL BE MADE BY FRANCO (COUNCIL OF REALM DOES NOT PLAY ROLE IN THIS DESIGNATION), PRESUMABLY RIGHT AFTER SELECTION OF PRESIDENT.  
RIVERO

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## Message Attributes

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